



The Patriarchate of Antioch & Their Eucharistic Communion with The Heretical Monophysites: Part II

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In one of my most recent articles, I wrote concerning the Patriarchate of Antioch being in Eucharistic communion with the Monophysite pseudo-churches, as evidenced by their own synodally-approved documents spanning publication from the late 1980's to the early 1990's. If you have not yet read the preceding research-article, you will need to note that the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch has established Eucharistic communion with those Monophysite confessions, which includes clergy from either side (Orthodox/Monophysite) serving as *Proistamenos* at each other's divine services, depending on who is the higher-ranking clergymen. These heretical documents which were approved by the Synod of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and signed by Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch and the Syrian Monophysite Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I was were, in part, one of the reasons that Father Matthew Vulcanescu of the Antiochian Archdiocese of the British Isles & Ireland invoked Canon 15 of the First-Second Council and canonically ceased communion and commemoration of his heretical local bishop, synod, and patriarch.



Metropolitan Silouan (Oner)

In addition to the heretical thirty-year old documents I wrote about in my prior article, I was also sent another public document as yet an additional example confirming that these heresies and canonical violations are being publicly practiced in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, Diocese of the British Isle & Ireland, under the leadership of Metropolitan Silouan (Oner). In this document which comes from the Antiochian Orthodox Church of St Dunstan of Canterbury (Poole, U.K.), Father Chrysostom

MacDonnell, a former Anglican clergyman, published a parish letter regarding certain lay parishioners who “complained of the fact that we commune Oriental-Orthodox Christians with the Holy Gifts” [1].

Father Chrysostom at the beginning of this document is criticizing the recent actions taken by Father Matthew Vulcanescu concerning his canonical right to invoke Canon 15 of the First-Second Council and to wall-off from a heretical bishop and patriarch. The Synod of Antioch's actions, which have been proven beyond a reasonable doubt to be heretical and schismatic in nature, are, in fact, promulgating the heresy of ecumenism and communing ecumenically condemned heretics. In this document Father Chrysostom MacDonnell states,

Many of you will be aware of recent disturbances within the archdiocese, and not least within our own parish community. This has resulted, sadly, in the deposition of Matei Vulcanescu from the priesthood after he published online articles that insulted our metropolitan and, in effect, accused him of heresy. Mr Vulcanescu (as he now is) served a small community in Liverpool and began a controversy over the issue of the reception of heterodox Christians into the Orthodox Church. He appears to have become the leader of a group of what we might call hyperdox (rather than Orthodox) fundamentalists, who have selectively raided the Holy Canons in order to prove that all 'converts' must be received by baptism. In fact, practice on this has varied historically, but it is generally accepted by the communion of Orthodox churches that those who have been baptised (at least, by effusion, if not immersion) in the name of the Holy Trinity, are received by *economia*, through Chrismation alone, following confession; the Holy Spirit making up for all that might be lacking. Mr Vulcanescu has refused to repent (as invited to do by *Sayedna*) and continues to publish selective canons out of their historical context, forgetting that canons (unlike theological dogmas) can be altered, for the canons are there to guide the daily praxis of the Church; they are not matters of the Faith. Furthermore, he still claims to be a priest of the Antiochian Orthodox Church (which he definitely is not) and still intends, he says, to serve the Divine Liturgy. This, of course, is illogical, for he no longer has a bishop. A priest only serves the Liturgy in loco episcopi; he is a stand-in for the local bishop, which is why he consecrates the Holy Gifts on the Antimension cloth, granted by the bishop. In other words, Mr Volcanescu has now fallen into Presbyterianism, a form of Protestantism that denies the need for bishops, contrary to Holy Tradition.

I myself, and indeed, all the clergy who formed the original Antiochian Deanery in the late 1990's, were received (with their families) by Chrismation, before being ordained. It is not just the implications of what Mr Volcanescu, and his small band of followers are saying, as regards the validity of our sacraments: it is the way that they have tried to divide the Body of Christ that has fostered schism. The suspicion is that he might have influenced five individuals who recently left our own congregation. Where they have gone now, I cannot tell, but whilst they search for the ethereally perfect hyperdox congregation (remembering that we, in Antioch, are still in communion with the mainstream Orthodox churches in this country) they would do well to read the Acts of the Apostles, chapter fifteen. They can remind themselves of how the apostolic Church dealt with the case of 'Certain men [who] came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."'

Those who recently left us also complained of the fact that we commune Oriental-Orthodox (non-Chalcedonian) Christians with the Holy Gifts. As you know, we have a number of Ethiopian and Eritrean members of the congregation. It is our practice to do this in conformity with what is done in the homeland of Antiochian Orthodoxy. (In Syria and Lebanon, for example, there will inevitably be a large number of mixed marriages.) It is also done in the Greek Orthodox Church, as I verified, recently, with my own spiritual father who serves in the Archdiocese of Thyateira (Patriarchate of Constantinople). We cannot commune or concelebrate with Oriental-Orthodox clergy, but we can minister to their lay people, who cannot conveniently go to their own church. There are, indeed, differences as concerns the Hypostatic Union, especially regarding confusion over the use of ancient philosophical terms (such as *physis*, *hypostasis* and *ousia*), but again, by *economia*, we can accommodate their laity who, after sixteen hundred years and by accident of birth, were brought up within a certain tradition of understanding. Such intercommunion, in fact, like the Baptism/Chrismation dispute, has a long history. There was, for example, a degree of shared communion in Southern Italy between the Orthodox and Roman Catholics right up to the seventeenth century. What is clear from such disputes as these, and those who pursue them to their own isolation, is that there is little understanding on their part of ecclesiastical authority; that private judgement and personal religion (see above!) take precedence over what is understood and shared in common. Such private judgement is the beginning of the road towards heresy [the Greek root being, αἵρεσις/'airesis, meaning a 'thing chosen'] [2].

According to this priest, his bishop, and his synod, the holy apostolic canons are easily overcome by custom or practices of a local church, because somewhere at some point in Church history we can find a singular example to promulgate the needed narrative. I wonder, what does Father Chrysostom and his heresy-promoting Bishop think of the Apostolic Canons which are in their essence so plainly written that they do not need any interpretation? Father Chrysostom, in his own publication, is in effect, exonerating Father Michael Vulcanescu even further by showing that Metropolitan Silouan, is in fact, preaching heresy, or at minimum tolerating it, for allowing his priest to commune ecumenically condemned heretics without them renouncing their heretical faith, confessing holy Orthodoxy, and being properly received into the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Apostolic Canon 46 states, “We ordain that a bishop, or presbyter, who has admitted the baptism or sacrifice of heretics, be deposed. For what concord has Christ with Belial, or what part has a believer with an infidel?” [3]. As can be seen, any clergyman, that accepts the baptism or the communion from those who are heretics are to be defrocked from the ranks of the clergy of the Orthodox Church. How then are we to accept this excuse that it is an *economia* to allow ecumenically condemned heretics to the divine mysteries?

In the *Definition of Faith of the Council of Chalcedon* these holy fathers who deliberated at the Holy Fourth Ecumenical Council put forth this decree, which is a statement of the Orthodox faith, that must be believed and accepted by all Orthodox Christians. This decree and definition of the Orthodox faith to this day is still rejected by those Monophysite confessions which includes the Ethiopian and Eritrean Monophysites who Metropolitan Silouan and Father Chrysostom are openly communing. How then do we admit those who do not share the same doctrinal faith as us to the mysteries? The Holy Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council declared the Orthodox faith with the “greatest accuracy and attention” saying,



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This wise and salutary formula of divine grace sufficed for the perfect knowledge and confirmation of religion; for it teaches the perfect [doctrine] concerning Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and sets forth the Incarnation of the Lord to them that faithfully receive it. But, forasmuch as persons undertaking to make void the preaching of the truth have through their individual heresies given rise to empty babblings; some of them daring to corrupt the mystery of the Lord's incarnation for us and refusing [to use] the name Mother of God (Θεοτόκος) in reference to the Virgin, while others, bringing in a confusion and mixture, and idly conceiving that the nature of the flesh and of the Godhead is all one, maintaining that the divine Nature of the Only Begotten is, by mixture, capable of suffering; therefore this present holy, great, and ecumenical synod, desiring to exclude every device against the Truth, and teaching that which is unchanged from the beginning, has at the very outset decreed that the faith of the Three Hundred and Eighteen Fathers shall be preserved inviolate. And on account of them that contend against the Holy Ghost, it confirms the doctrine afterwards delivered concerning the substance of the Spirit by the One Hundred and Fifty holy Fathers who assembled in the imperial City; which doctrine they declared unto all men, not as though they were introducing anything that had been lacking in their predecessors, but in order to explain through written documents their faith concerning the Holy Ghost against those who were seeking to destroy his sovereignty.

And, on account of those who have taken in hand to corrupt the mystery of the dispensation [i.e. the Incarnation] and who shamelessly pretend that he who was born of the holy Virgin Mary was a mere man, it receives the synodical letters of the Blessed Cyril, Pastor of the Church of Alexandria, addressed to Nestorius and the Easterns, judging them suitable, for the refutation of the frenzied folly of Nestorius, and for the instruction of those who long with holy ardour for a knowledge of the saving symbol. And, for the confirmation of the orthodox doctrines, it has rightly added to these the letter of the President of the great and old Rome, the most blessed and holy Archbishop Leo, which was addressed to Archbishop Flavian of blessed memory, for the removal of the false doctrines of Eutyches, judging them to be agreeable to the confession of the great Peter, and as it were a common pillar against misbelievers. For it opposes those who would rend the mystery of the dispensation into a Duad of Sons; it repels from the sacred assembly those who dare to say that the Godhead of the Only Begotten is capable of suffering; it resists those who imagine a mixture or confusion of the two natures of Christ; it drives away those who fancy his form of a servant is of an heavenly or some substance other than that which was taken of us, and it anathematizes those who foolishly talk of two natures of our Lord before the union, conceiving that after the union there was only one.

Following the holy Fathers we teach with one voice that the Son [of God] and our Lord Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same [Person], that he is perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, very God and very man, of a reasonable soul and [human] body consisting, consubstantial with the Father as touching his Godhead, and consubstantial with us as touching his manhood; made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted; begotten of his Father before the worlds according to his Godhead; but in these last days for us men and for our salvation born [into the world] of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God according to his manhood. This one and the same Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son [of God] must be confessed to be in two natures, unconfusedly, immutably, indivisibly, inseparably [united], and that without the distinction of nature's being taken away by such union, but rather the peculiar property of each nature being preserved and being united in one Person and subsistence, not separated or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten, God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Prophets of old time have spoken concerning him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ hath taught us, and as the Creed of the Fathers hath delivered to us.

These things, therefore, having been expressed by us with the greatest accuracy and attention, the holy Ecumenical Synod defines that no one shall be suffered to bring forward a different faith (ἐτέραν πίστιν), nor to write, nor to put together, nor to excogitate, nor to teach it to others. But such as dare either to put together another faith, or to bring forward or to teach or to deliver a different Creed (ἕτερον σύμβολον) to such as wish to be converted to the knowledge of the truth, from the Gentiles, or Jews or any heresy whatever, if they be Bishops or clerics let them be deposed, the Bishops from the Episcopate, and the clerics from the clergy; but if they be monks or laics: let them be anathematized.

After the reading of the definition, all the most religious Bishops cried out: This is the faith of the fathers: *let the metropolitans forthwith subscribe it*: let them forthwith, in the presence of the judges, subscribe it: let that which has been well defined have no delay: this is the faith of the Apostles: by this we all stand: thus we all believe [4].

What is also concerning in this statement is that Father Chrysostom MacDonnell confirms that this is not only the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in the Diocese of the British Isle & Ireland but gives testimony from his spiritual father, who serves as a clergyman in the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Archdiocese of Thyateira, that they, too, are communing openly ecumenically-condemned Monophysite heretics. Father Chrysostom writes, “It is our practice to do this in conformity with what is done in the homeland of Antiochian Orthodoxy. (In Syria and Lebanon, for example, there will inevitably be a large number of mixed marriages.) It is also done in the Greek Orthodox Church, as I verified, recently, with my own spiritual father who serves in the Archdiocese of Thyateira (Patriarchate of Constantinople)” [5].



Map from St Dunstan Orthodox Church to Coptic Parish, Poole, UK.

Father Chrysostom also states that, “We cannot commune or concelebrate with Oriental-Orthodox clergy, but we can minister to their lay people, who cannot conveniently go to their own church” [6]. However, is this accurate? We know that it is not, as it was decreed by their own synodal document approved by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and signed by Patriarch IV in 1991, which states, “In localities where there is only one priest, from either Church, he will celebrate services for the faithful of both Churches, *including the Divine Liturgy*,

pastoral duties, and holy matrimony. He will keep an independent record for each Church and transmit that of the sister Church to its authorities” [6]. We can see that what Father Chrysostom is saying is but a half-truth, and in reality they are in actual eucharistic communion with the Monophysites.

In the next line, Father Chrysostom, creates another example for an excuse that they would like to use, in order to give an "economia" for allowing ecumenically condemned heretics to receive the eucharist in their Antiochian Patriarchate parish. This excuse is allegedly out of convenience for the Monophysite faithful that do not have their own church to attend. Is this the case that the Monophysites at his parish have nowhere else to go? A simple Google Maps search shows us that there is, in fact, a Coptic parish (Bournemouth, U.K.), only four miles from Father Chrysostom's parish, where these Monophysite parishioners can go. In addition to the Coptic parish very close by, there is also an Eritrean Monophysite parish (Bristol, U.K.), seventy-one miles from Father Chrysostom's parish. There are also six Ethiopian Monophysite parishes in Greater London. So to say that these Greek Orthodox Antiochian clergy are ministering to these monophysite parishioners out of an economy for convenience sake is not realistic at best and lying at worst.

We have to ask, how much longer will the lay faithful in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople put up with their heretical bishops and coward priests who turn a blind eye to what they know in their hearts is a betrayal of Holy Orthodoxy? Would the fathers of the holy fourth Ecumenical Council stand on your side concerning this issue? The clergy of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, who commune ecumenically condemned heretics, needs to heed the advice of our Father among the saints, Saint John of Damascus who writes, "With all our strength, therefore, let us beware lest we receive communion from or grant it to heretics; Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, saith the Lord, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest we become partakers in their dishonour and condemnation" [7].



Map from St Dunstan Orthodox Church to Eritrean,
Bristol, UK.

Many will ask, what can they do then, if their bishops, priests, and synod have all adopted heresy? Should the the faithful stay and continue to tolerate these heretical activities and these pseudo-bishops? Father Seraphim (Rose) once wisely said that, “‘Global Orthodoxy’ has not listened to the Synod’s pleas, and therefore those who wish to remain Orthodox have no choice but to leave ‘global Orthodoxy.’ In the 15th century those who were not with St. Mark of Ephesus were not in the Church—and this situation is being approached today” [8].

The Narthex: Newsletter of St Dunstan’s Antiochian Orthodox Church



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[2]. Ibid.

[3]. The Canons of the Holy and Altogether August Apostles, “Apostolic Canon XLVI,” in *Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14*, ed. Philip Schaff & Henry Wace (Peabody: Hendrickson Publications, 1999), 597.

[4]. The Holy Fourth Ecumenical Council, “The Definition of Faith of the Council of Chalcedon,” in *Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14*, ed. Philip Schaff & Henry Wace (Peabody: Hendrickson Publications, 1999), 262-265.

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[6]. "Statement of the Orthodox Church of Antioch on the Theological Dialogue: On the Relations between the Eastern and Syrian Orthodox Churches," Syriac Orthodox Resources, accessed January 3rd, 2023, <https://syriacorthodoxresources.org/Ecumenism/19911112socrumorthstmt.html>

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[8]. Father Seraphim (Rose) to Father David Black, Letter 51, Platina, California (June 8/21, 1970).